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Massep language

Massep (Masep, Potafa, Wotaf) is a poorly documented Papuan language spoken by fewer than 50 people in the single village of Masep in West Pantai District, Sarmi Regency, Papua. Despite the small number of speakers, however, language use is vigorous. It is surrounded by the Kwerba languages Airoran and Samarokena.[4]

Massep	
Wotaf	
Native to	Indonesia
Region	Papua: Sarmi Regency, West Pantai District, north coast (Masep village); also west of Sarmi near Apauwer River
Ethnicity	85 (2000)[1][2]
Native speakers	25 (2000)[1]
Language family	Foja Range ▪ Kwerbic ▪ **Massep**
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	mvs
Glottolog	mass1263 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/mass1263)[3]

Coordinates: 1.75°S 138.29°E

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Classification

Clouse, Donohue, and Ma (2002) conclude that it definitely is not a Kwerba language,[5] as it had been classified by Wurm (1975). They did not notice connections to any other language family. However, Usher (2018) classifies it as Greater Kwerbic.[6]

Ethnologue, *Glottolog*, and Foley (2018)[4] list it as a language isolate,[1][3] but it has not been included in wider surveys, such as Ross (2005). The pronouns are not dissimilar from those of Trans–New Guinea languages, but Massep is geographically distant from that family.

Phonology

Consonants:[4]

	t	c	k
			kʷ
			ᵑg
ɸ	s	ʃ	
β			ɣ
m	n	ɲ	
	r		
w		j	

Some probable consonant leniting sound changes proposed by Foley (2018):

- *p > ɸ
- *b > β
- *d > r
- *k > ɣ (perhaps partially)

Vowels:[4]

i	u
e	o
a	

Pronouns

Pronouns are:[4]

	sg	**pl**
1	ka	nyi
2	gu	je
3	evi	ive

Morphology

Massep case suffixes as quoted by Foley (2018) from Clouse (2002):[4][5]

suffix	case
-o ~ -u ~ -a	accusative
-ɣoke	dative
-aveno	instrumental
-meno	associative
-(a)vri	locative
-ni	allative
-a	temporal

Sentences

Massep sentences as quoted by Foley (2018) from Clouse (2002):[4]

(1)

ka icin-o fartasi unu-ɣoke
1SG stone-ACC throw dog-DAT

'I threw a stone at the dog.'

(2)

je saremna yaf-avri
2PL sit house-LOC

'You (pl.) sat in the house.'

(3)

gu ko-war-emon
2SG 1SG.OBJ-see-SG.TNS

'You see me.'

Word order is SOV.

References

1. Massep (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/mvs/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Massep language (https://www.ethnologue.com/15/show_language/mvs) at *Ethnologue* (15th ed., 2005)
3. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Massep" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/mass1263). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
4. Foley, William A. (2018). "The languages of Northwest New Guinea". In Palmer, Bill (ed.). *The Languages and Linguistics of the New Guinea Area: A Comprehensive Guide*. The World of Linguistics. **4**. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. pp. 433–568. ISBN 978-3-11-028642-7.

5. Clouse, Duane; Donohue, Mark; Ma, Felix (2002). "Survey Report of the North Coast of Irian Jaya" (https://web.archive.org/web/20160303200905/http://www-01.sil.org/silesr/2002/SILESR2002-078.pdf) (PDF). *SIL*. Archived from the original (http://www-01.sil.org/silesr/2002/SILESR2002-078.pdf) (PDF) on 2016-03-03. Retrieved 2018-07-23.
6. Usher, Timothy. West Foja Range (https://sites.google.com/site/newguineaworld/families/north-new-guinea/foja-range/west-foja-range). *New Guinea World*.

External links

- Timothy Usher and Mark Donohue, New Guinea World, Masep (https://sites.google.com/site/newguineaworld/families/northwest-new-guinea/foja-range/west-foja-range/masep)

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